

I strongly support SB 554, legislation to keep firearms out of public government buildings and schools. Americans observed in horror on January 6, 2021 what can happen when individuals with guns enter a public building. The gun lobby has gone way too far in proclaiming their rights under the 2nd amendment, and we have a major public health crisis in our society now resulting from gun violence. Local governments should be able to decide for themselves whether guns should be allowed in public buildings.

Currently, local and school officials in Oregon are forced to allow the carrying of loaded firearms into government buildings and all public Oregon schools including grades K-12 and most areas of college campuses. Research has shown that having guns in public buildings is dangerous and risky. From 2013 to 2019, Everytown for Gun Safety identified 549 incidents of gunfire on school grounds. Of these, 347 occurred on the grounds of an elementary, middle, or high school, resulting in 129 deaths and 270 people wounded.

Schools should have the choice to prohibit firearms on campus. I don't want my young grandchildren to grow up in a world where they must have regular drills on how to respond to mass shootings. This is a uniquely American problem. Other countries have responded to their mass shootings by enacting sensible gun laws and we must do the same.